

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration of the above-identified patent application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Applicant has herein canceled all of the claims of the application and has added six additional claims. It is requested the examination continue.

Claims 97, 101 and 102 recite a gripping member having an opening formed therein, in which opening a striker member can be captured. Claim 97 particularly specifies that the gripping member rotates to a capture position when the striker member enters the opening and rotates to a release position when the striker member exits the opening. On the other hand, claims 101 and 102 specify a catch assembly including the gripping member wherein the catch assembly moves to a retention position when the striker member enters the opening and moves to a disengagement position when the striker member exits the opening. The gripping member refers to part 18 shown in Figures 1a, 1b while the catch assembly refers to the combination of part 18 and part 14 shown in those same figures. Part 14 is referred to as a carrier member in the claims.

Claims 97, 101 and 102 further recite a spring which is in a lower state of inner tension (e.g., is less compressed) when the striker member is captured in the opening of the gripping member and which is in the higher state of inner tension (e.g., is more compressed) when the striker member is released from the opening. This change of the state of inner tension of the spring depending on whether or not the striker member is captured in the opening of the gripping member is characteristic of the type of latch considered by the invention. The lower state of inner tension of the spring in the captured state of the striker member implies an increasing counteracting spring force to

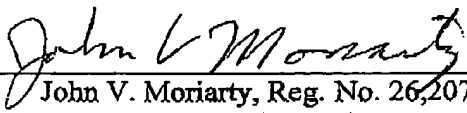
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be overcome when opening the latch by withdrawing the striker member from the gripping member.

Claim 97 specifies a rolling contact between the stop (part 28 in Figures 1a, 1b) and the gripping member. Claims 101 and 102, on the other hand, are silent on the stop and more generally recite a rolling contact provided anywhere in the latch between a portion of the latch frame and a portion of the catch assembly or between two relatively moving portions of the catch assembly.

All three independent claims 97, 101 and 102 now recite the presence of one or more antifriction bearings to support at least one of the portions of the latch that are specified as being in rolling contact. In claim 97, the one or more antifriction bearings are specifically recited to support the contact portion of the stop device. Claims 98 and 99 specify two concrete embodiments for the location of such antifriction bearings in the stop device. According to claim 98, the stop device includes a pin that forms the contact portion at its outer circumferential surface and is rotatably supported at its ends by antifriction bearings. According to claim 99, the stop device comprises a fixed axle which has mounted thereon an antifriction bearing rotatably supporting the contact portion. Both embodiments are disclosed in the original application, cf. page 10, lines 13-17 and page 15, lines 36 to page 16, line 5 of the English text.

Respectfully submitted,

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